

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS,PFFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT -CANAL ZONE BOMBINGS

REF: PANAMA 7514

SUMMARY: SITUATION IN CANAL ZONE REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED; THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF FALSE BOMB THREATS BUT NO FURTHER ACTUAL INCIDENTS, AND RESIDENTS REMAIN TENSE. GOVERNOR HAS ANNOUNCED A REWARD OF \$5000 FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO CONVICTION OF PERSONS OR PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR BOMBINGS. END SUMMARY.

1. SITUATION IN CANAL ZONE REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED FROM THAT REPORTED REFTEL; THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER INCIDENTS OF EITHER BOMB EXPLOSIONS OR DEVICES FOUND, BUT ZONE AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN BESET BY A CONTINUING WAVE OF FALSE BOMB THREATS. THESE HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT ENOUGH THAT GOVERNOR PARFITT ISSUED A PRESS RELEASE NOVEMBER 4 CALLING FOR COOPERATION IN HALTING THESE HOAXES AND REMINDING THAT SUCH FALSE THREATS ARE SERIOUS CRIMINAL OFFENSE.

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2. IN SAME RELEASE, GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED THAT A REWARD OF

\$5000 WILL BE PAID FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO ARREST AND CRIMINAL CONVICTION OF A PERSON OR PERSONS GUILTY OF SETTING BOMBS IN CANAL ZONE. RELEASE WAS GIVEN ROUTINE COVERAGE BY BOTH PANAMA CITY TV CHANNELS EVENING NOVEMBER 4, AND WAS PRINTED IN "STAR AND HERALD" AND "ESTRELLA" NOVEMBER 5 EDITIONS.

3. PRO-GOP "MATUTINO" FOR NOVEMBER 5 FAILED TO MENTION PANCANAL RELEASE, WHICH PRESUMABLY WAS RECEIVED AFTER PAPER WAS SET UP. "CRITICA", HOWEVER, COVERED THE SITUATION WITH ITS USUAL FINE SENSE OF THE SENSATIONAL AND MACABRE. IT ANNOUNCED THE REWARD UNDER A BANNER HEADLINE SAYING THAT A CURFEW HAD BEEN IMPOSED IN THE ZONE; THE ARTICLE EXPLAINED, WITHOUT CITING A SOURCE, THAT SUCH A STEP WAS "POSSIBLE AT ANY MOMENT". PANCANAL ADVISES THAT NO CURFEW IS UNDER CONSIDERATION. ARTICLE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY NEARLY A FULL PAGE OF PICTURES OF CARS WRECKED BY BOMBING AND SIMILAR THEMES. TONE WAS NOT EXULTANT--"CRITICA" SEEMS SIMPLY UNABLE TO PASS UP A GOOD WRECK, REGARDLESS OF ITS CAUSE.

4. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE MINEOGRAPHED FLYSHEET IN WHICH A HITHERTO UNHEARD-OF GROUP STYLING ITSELF "YANKY GO HOME" CLAIMS CREDIT FOR THE BOMBINGS HAS CONTINUED TO APPEAR IN PANAMA CITY. THE LATEST APPEARANCE WE KNOW OF WAS A COPY PLACED ON A CAR OWNED BY A MEMBER OF THE GAO STAFF IN PANAMA. THE CAR BORE A TYPE OF PANAMA LICENSE PLATE (WITH THE NUMERICAL PREFIX "10") NORMALLY ISSUED TO PERSONS LIVING IN PANAMA CITY BUT WORKING IN CANAL ZONE. NEARBY CARS OF OTHER OFFICIAL PERSONNEL WHICH BORE PANAMA "CD" PLATES RECEIVED NO FLYSHEETS.

COMMENT: SUCH PLACEMENT IS CLEARLY AN ATTEMPT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "FOREIGN" AND CANAL ZONE, AND SINGLE OUT THE LATTER FOR ATTENTION. END COMMENT.
JORDEN

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